

THEY CALL US



Pamphlet 1

Fall 2020

OUR VOICES ARE OUR WEAPON



They Call Us is a literary magazine created by powerful womxn wanting to empower other womxn. Using media, art, and literature as a means to inspire, They Call Us wants to tell the everyday struggles of womxn from around the world. The purpose of art is to create change, so They Call Us works to unite womxn and artists to tell the stories of those that are normally silenced. Our goal is to ignite conversation and encourage womxn of all ages, race, sexuality, nationality, ability, and the like to share their stories. They Call Us wishes to diversify the messages we see online and change the dialogue to give credibility to all of us womxn who have felt helpless and lacking a credible voice.

THE MODERN WITCH **5**

7 SALEM
WITCH TRIALS

FIXATION OF
THE WITCH
VEXATION **8**

*"We are the Granddaughters
of the Witches
You Were Not
Able to Burn"* **10**

12 YOUR COVEN
SISTERHOOD

THE MAGIC OF TAROT **14**

16 MALLEUS
MALEFICARUM OF
THE 21ST CENTURY

18 Witches &
SEXUALITY

*How To Dry Herbs Like a
Real Kitchen Witch* **19**

**RUN TO THE
KITCHEN**

**AND
FETCH
ME** **20**

A CLEAVER



THE MODERN WITCH

A Foreword by Anna Skladany

Artwork by Arran Bowen

Witchcraft. Satanism. Wicca. Paganism.
The occult. Voodoo. Brujeria.

You've probably heard of these before, at least in passing. But what do they mean? And why am I bringing up Satanism in a feminist zine?

The title of this special Halloween issue is "They Call Us Witches" - referring to the cruelty often hurled at women for acting outside of a constrictive view of what a woman should be. Breaking past these boundaries today often means insults and scorn, but in the past it oftentimes meant a diagnosis of 'hysteria', corporeal punishment, or even death. In this magazine, 'witch' is a shorthand for the

defiant woman that goes beyond society's narrow standard of femininity, from single mothers to CEOs.

But what are witches, really?

Maybe you know or have seen someone who dabbles in witchcraft. Maybe you've passed by a dimly lit store with an esoteric name, the smell of incense wafting from its doors. Tarot cards, smudging sticks, candles, alters, crystals - there is a definite material aesthetic that's now associated with modern Western witchcraft.

Witchcraft is a broad term for a variety of contemporary spiritual and sometimes religious practices. This includes - but is certainly not limited to - tarot card readings, spiritual cleansings, candle dressing, and crystal use. In general, these



practices focus on an individual's intent and will combined with rituals in order to enact some change upon the world or themselves.

Adjacent to witchcraft is paganism. Paganism is an umbrella term for various religions inspired by the belief systems of pre-Abrahamic Europe, North Africa, and Asia. This includes revitalizations of old indigenous and ethnic religions such as the Afro-Caribbean Vodou and other non-Abrahamic religions such as Satanism. People often refer to the modern practice of pagan religions as neo-paganism in order to help differentiate between separate understandings of the word; many older definitions of paganism explain it as any religion outside of Christianity, or any polytheistic religion.

Witchcraft and paganism both exist as an alternative to religious practices today that many view as restrictive - the late 20th and 21st century boom of women practicing witchcraft was likely in no small part due to an underlying message of independence, personal power, and a reverence for the divine feminine. Many neo-pagan religions also tend to be far more accepting of people that more traditional or conservative religions would preach against, namely members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Witchcraft and pagan religions have seen a long history of twisted representation in popular media; statuettes of important Vodou spirits become pin-cushion voodoo dolls, the pentacle morphs from a symbol of protection and authority into the hallmark of a devil-worshipper. Ethnic and indigenous religions have borne the brunt of this stigma, many of them being made illegal by (largely white) colonizers and staying that way for centuries.

Demonic cults and blood sacrifice have become a trope in modern media, of course the haunted house is built on an old Native American burial ground. The witches make sexual deals with the devil for power. Put a pin through the heart of the little cloth doll and stop a man's heart. Look on in horror as outsiders and villagers alike burn alive under the bright Swedish sun (spoilers).

It's with this context in mind that we use the word witch, referring not to the deeply stigmatized practices of oppressed indigenous groups, but the innocent girls caught in the frenzy of a paranoid, puritanical society and the shrewd female politicians and the independent mothers. Here, we use the word witch not as a signifier of any religious or spiritual practice, but as a word of empowerment and defiance to refer to women who would not (and in many cases do not) fit narrow societal expectations of femininity and womanhood. We are too loud, too bossy, too confident. We are impure, obstinate, and self-reliant. We cut our hair short, or keep our legs hairy, or shop in the men's section. We barge into male-dominated spaces and dare to sit with our legs uncrossed.

We are not the witches of alters and candles and spells, but the witches of *The Crucible* and *The Scarlet Letter* as seen through a 21st century lens.

Our coven is not one of ritual and spirituality, but a group to revel in our unique experiences and connect with like minds.

And our magic is that of a woman far too bold to shove themselves into a role they do not fit in.



Bridget Bishop

Martha Corey

Sarah Good

Mary Eastey

Rebecca Nurse

Alice Parker

Susannah Martin

Ann Pudeater

Elizabeth How

Margaret Scott

Sarah Wilds

Wilmott Reed

George Burroughs

Samuel Wardwell

John Proctor

Mary Parker

John Willard

Sarah Osborne

George Jacobs, Sr.

Roger Toothaker

Martha Carrier

Lyndia Dustin

Giles Corey

Ann Foster

Above are the names of everyone who was executed or died as a direct result of the Salem Witch Trials. This list is a small percentage of the thousands of people who have died worldwide due to the persecution of Witchcraft.



SALEM WITCH TRIALS

By Meg Harris

Artwork by Arran Bowen

We all know the tales of the Salem Witch Trials, the float test, the raids, the flames... but do you know how it all began? If not, let me illuminate the situation.

In 1689 the English rulers King William and Queen Mary started a war with the French in the American colonies (Blumberg). The war put a great strain on port areas, particularly Massachusetts, thus creating a greater divide between the richer noble families and the working class that relied on agriculture to survive. Tensions also grew with the appointment of Samuel Parris as the Salem Village priest. His greedy nature and rigid ways fed into the rising discontent (Blumberg). Many felt the tensions and infighting was the work of the devil, claiming that the death, greed, and class divisions could only mean that the devil's workers were living among them (Blumberg).

The first trial in the American Colonies took place when Reverend Parris' daughter Elizabeth and niece, Abigail Williams, began experiencing screaming fits, throwing household objects and feeling their bodies

contorting in strange ways (Blumberg). They were placed in jail and, in the eyes of many, confirmed the public's satanic fears. While the Witch Trials were not only experienced in the US, they did offer their own unique plague on women accused of witchcraft (Blumberg).

In Massachusetts' body of laws the first great crime was adultery, the second was witchcraft. The original law read, "if any man or woman be a witch, that is, has or consults with a familiar spirit, they shall be put to death" (Schiff).

History contests exactly how many women (and men) were executed during the trials, but there is information on why these women were singled out. Unsurprisingly, most of the women accused were based on personal vendettas or because they did not fit into the societal order (Brooks). The trials were less about the fear of magic, and more the fear of economic competition, strong-willed women, and female intelligence. These women were too smart, too bold, too ambitious and by those guidelines, I'd say we're a little witchy here too.

A Brief History of the Salem Witch Trials
by Jess Blumberg
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/a-brief-history-of-the-salem-witch-trials-175162489/>

The Witches of Salem
by Stacy Schiff
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/09/07/the-witches-of-salem>

The Salem Witch Trials Victims:
Who Were They?
by Rebecca Beatrice Brooks
<https://historyofmassachusetts.org/salem-witch-trials-victims/>

The Salem Witch Trials
from Salem.org
<https://www.salem.org/salem-witch-trials/>

FIXATION OF THE WITCH VEXATION

By Morgan Kail-Ackerman

I imagine a world where "Witch Hunt" isn't synchronous with women's namesake
where having a vagina doesn't mean being burned at the stake,
pressed to death with stones,
and stakes and stones leave me with broken bones
but on Gallows Hill words could never save me.

Where I wasn't seen as wicked for having aspirations and dreams
or screaming and contorting narrations against his regimes.
When I wasn't killed because I seemed weak-minded.

They really believed that when we were alone, we could only think evil.

It's hilarious that people think Salem is of the past
as if women today are not constantly harassed,
men determined to give a sermon
while they're staring at her ass,
say they'll straighten Satan's Salemites
that the Devil's Day has passed
History is our present.
If only I could actually use a hex to get some respect.

Imagine a world where I wasn't accused for being strong
for singing my own song
for finding a place where I belong.

Instead I'm told I'm a witch
a bitch
should just stitch
and never enrich
other women to claim their power.

I imagine a world where I'm not treated as a Devil's Worshipper for believing in myself.



Artwork by
Anna Skladany

"WE ARE THE GRANDDAUGHTERS OF THE WITCHES YOU WERE NOT ABLE TO BURN"

Feminism and Witches: Second Wave to Now

By Meg Harris

Historians identified two major feminist movements. The first wave of feminism focused on a woman's right to vote, the second wave focused primarily on sexual rights. However, the second wave revealed so much more. In the 1960s and 70s, women saw the patriarchal cage and tried to get other women to see the bars too.

When WWII ended, women were forced to leave their jobs and return to a life of strictly motherhood, returning to the background of society. It is important to remember there was never a time when all women stayed in the house. Most minority families could not afford to live off of a single income. Minority, lower class women held jobs long before second wave feminism, but the post-war push out of the work force made women realize not only what they were missing, but what little

choice they had in their lives.

As our society was situated (haha the past tense... like this doesn't happen anymore) women legally could not hold certain jobs, couldn't go to particular schools, couldn't have total financial freedom, most of all they couldn't speak their mind without being called... yup you guessed it an evil, slutty, selfish WITCH!

So we drove into the skid.

Call me a witch? Fine. To quote Elphaba, "I'm wicked through and through!" and W.I.T.C.H was born.

W.I.T.C.H is an organization that stood for Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell. Not bad boomers, that one is pretty badass.

W.I.T.C.H encompassed the patriarchal wake up call best in their chant “Knowledge is power through which you control our mind, our spirit, our body, our soul HEXXXXXX”. These women would dress up in witch costumes, walk through crowded areas, chant the above, and hex passers by.

You would assume that their main targets were men, but no, the attention they were seeking was from other women. They targeted women to get their attention, get them to ask questions, wake up, and potentially join the movement. The Organization is still around today but engages in different activities. As one of the participants, Mary Dore, explains, “the women’s movement had no bandwidth—no money, no press. They did a lot of outrageous things so other women would even know about them. You don’t need that now.”

As Mary observes, with social media and cameras in every pocket it’s no longer hard to get peoples’ attention or spread the

word about movements, so then why are witches making a reappearance in modern feminism?

Well the answer is simple. While the need to be outlandish has faded, witches as a symbol of female empowerment and spitting in the eye of the blatant ways men try to confine women is still very much alive. Becoming the very creature men claim we are takes back the name and strips the “insult” of its power.

I’ll leave you with the words of Sady Doyle, “There is a fire on the horizon. You can see it burning, out on the edges of the world. The violence we have survived can be our guide to what needs to change. The fire that burned the witches can be the fire that lights our way. Our power is waiting for us, out in forbidden spaces, beyond the world of men. Step forward and claim it. Step forward into the boundless and female dark.”

Meet the Witches, Lesbian Separatists, and Other Brave Feminists Who Shook Up the '60s and '70s
by Samantha Michaels
<https://www.motherjones.com/media/2015/02/second-wave-feminists-documentary-shes-beautiful-when-shes-angry/>

Women are Invoking the Witch to Find Their Power in a Patriarchal Society
by Sofia Quaglia
<https://qz.com/1739043/the-resurgence-of-the-witch-as-a-symbol-of-feminist-empowerment/>

W.I.T.C.H. and Witchcraft in Radical Feminist Activism
by Laisa Schweigert
https://repository.asu.edu/attachments/201251/content/Schweigert_asu_0010N_17766.pdf

Monsters, men and magic: why feminists turned to witchcraft to oppose Trump
by Sady Doyle
<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2019/aug/07/monsters-men-magic-trump-awoke-angry-feminist-witches>



YOUR COVEN SISTERHOOD

By Morgan Kail-Ackerman

Artwork by Anna Skladany

February 1970, Washington

Based on true events

After requesting an audience with Satan at the New York Stock Exchange, she was ready for something even better. Faith, dressed in a comically large, black dress, and packing an even larger black hat into her bag, was ready to protest early birth control pills. Alice, dressed in white, stepped out cautiously from the kitchen. Faith was surprised to see her, considering the short leash her husband kept.

“Faith, I’m unsure of what you’re doing,” Alice said, concern etched into her face.

Faith took her in for a moment before responding. “Unsure of what? Fighting for equality?”

“Equality is important, but the way you’re going about it is wrong.”

“W.I.T.C.H. is making a difference. We’re

showing the magic of witches. The power that comes from our own selves as women, working in concert with our sisters.”

Alice threw up her hands. It was obvious she had practiced this speech, which made Faith even more vexed. “You’re catcalling people on Wall Street. That’s not advancing the rights of women, just causing a scene with your ridiculous costumes and stupid rhymes. Rhymes aren’t legislation.”

“I’ve always wondered how some women don’t believe in their own rights. It’s hard to know my sister is one of them.” Faith didn’t mean to sound so cold, but she couldn’t help herself. She always knew Alice was quiet, yet she never seemed passive.

“I believe, just not in what W.I.T.C.H. is doing. What does it stand for today? Women Indentured to Traveler’s Corporate Hell? Women Infuriated at Taking Care of Hoodlums?”

“The Women’s International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell,” Faith said.

“Like that’s so much better. All you did this week was call women whores at your last rally!”

Faith took a step closer to Alice, her jaw clenched. “No, it was a take on ‘Confront the War-makers’. We instead said ‘Confront the Whore-makers.’ Wordplay, Alice.”

“They may not have wanted to get married but they had to.” Alice looked small, but her voice was projecting loudly throughout the kitchen. “I, for one, am going to follow. If I’m quiet and do what my husband says, I might have a chance to use my voice for women.”

Faith shook her head. “Alice, if you really believe that, you’re dumber than I thought.”

Alice didn’t know how to respond.

“Men aren’t just going to give us rights for being quiet,” Faith said, her voice growing louder. “We have to take what is ours.” And without looking back, she walked out the door.

Alice, with a croak, yelled, “You always said sisterhood is what keeps women together, Faith.”

She waited a second, and then turned around. Faith glared at her sister and said, “Only when all the sisters believe in their own power.”

.....

Standing in front of the Senate, Faith was nervous. Normally dressing as a witch and fighting the patriarchy didn’t make her worried, but she couldn’t stop thinking about the critiques her sister had said. Was she really doing the right thing? Was there a “right thing” to do in a time of change and transformation?

Faith, along with six members of W.I.T.C.H., were all ready to interrupt the Texan Senator, Ralph Yar-something. To be honest, she didn’t really care what his name was. Faith wasn’t going to listen, let alone

believe what he had to say on population control. They had formed a brilliant plan, a witty rhyme, and were ready to grab the attention of the crowd, but Faith was still conflicted.

“What’s wrong?” Robin asked, seeing Faith’s twisted face.

“Is this right?”

Robin laughed in her face. “Since when are you someone who doubts our covenant?”

“I believe in rights, I believe in women gathering and sharing power, but are we making a difference?”

“We won’t know until they write the history books.”

At that, Faith was convinced. Not completely, but enough to move forward. Women were suffering from early versions of birth control medications, forced down their throats by their husbands, and she needed to fight. She could not stay silent.

“Let’s go.”

The women jumped out of the bush they were hiding in, tying their witch hats around their neck. Without any apprehension, they walked straight up on the stage, where Ralph was speaking.

“What are you -”

But he never finished, for Faith had taken the microphone.

“You think you can cure all of the world’s ills, by making poor women take your unhealthy pills!” Faith screamed into the microphone, with yells of her fellow witches echoing behind her. She smiled, for she knew she was making a difference. She believed in her cause, and the women behind her. Faith knew sharing power was the true definition of a witch.

THE MAGIC OF TAROT

By Arran Bowen

The use of tarot as a way of divination first became popular in the late 1700's. The most popular deck known to this day is the Rider-Waite-Smith Deck, first printed in 1909. Each deck consists of 22 Major Arcana cards, and 56 Minor Arcana cards divided into four suits. It is believed that each card represents a certain archetype, situation, or energy. While tarot is used as a witchy practice today, tarot decks also have a rich history as artwork. Originally, before the invention of the printing press, each card was handpainted. Some decks are now sold specifically as art pieces and usually consist of fewer cards.

THE ARCANNA

The Major Arcana cards of any tarot deck are a BIG deal. They represent universal themes and general archetypes. Many of them come across as characters, such as The Empress, The Hermit, or The Fool, and can often be read as people in our lives. However, they can also represent feelings, and most of the time, they demand action. The Minor Arcana cards make up the majority of each tarot deck. There are four suits that represent different aspects of human life. Each suit has 10 numbered cards and 4 court cards, or family cards.



THE FOUR SUITS



Wands are the suit of passion. They express creativity, activism, and primal energy. Creative people often pull the suit of wands in a reading. They are fiery, high-spirited, and bold. The elemental sign for wands is fire.



Cups are the suit of emotion. They express relationships, intuition, and human connection. They are vibrant and romantic, and usually involve decisions made with our heart. The elemental sign for cups is water.



Swords are the suit of logic. They express complex thought, planning, and analysis. They are cool, calculated, and harsh, but can also represent overthinking, madness, and conflict. If cups represent the heart, then swords represent the mind. The elemental sign for swords is air.



Pentacles are the suit of materialism. Also known as coins, they express the tangible world around us, and can often refer to financial wealth, career, or physical manifestations of reality. The elemental sign for pentacles is earth.

HOW TO READ

If each card in the deck represents an energy or idea, these energies are then translated to pertain to a specific situation. When formulating an inquiry for a tarot reading, it is important to avoid yes/no questions or ones with simple answers. Reading the deck is about contemplation, and it is important to remember that no card is inherently good or bad. For example, pulling the Death Card does not necessarily mean you are going to die, but maybe something is going to die within your life; it is about letting go.



TYPES OF SPREADS

If you have a deck, you most likely understand the most basic spreads. A spread is another name for a tarot reading, and refers to how the cards are laid out in front of you, and how many you pull. The most famous is probably a Celtic Cross, which consists of 10 cards, and is usually best for intricate and complicated problems. The best and easiest spread for beginners is a simple three-card spread. This is incredibly versatile and can be interpreted in a variety of ways. It also sometimes fun to make up your own spreads, or just pull one card from the deck and see what happens. It is entirely up to you how you handle your cards. Below are some examples for how to read a three-card spread. In tarot, it is customary to read cards from left to right.



MALLEUS MALEFICARUM OF THE 21ST CENTURY

By Kailah Peters

Before I can endeavor to destroy witches from this society, I must first prove that they do exist. A witch is not only an outsider, a critic of mainstream society, but a hindrance to the structure of society itself. She is any woman who challenges the patriarchal order or poses a threat to the world as we know it. In this definition, there is no need for the witch to fly on a broomstick, brew potions, or perform a hex (though she may). Even the most mundane acts of disturbance mark the woman a witch, for she will inevitably progress to more wicked things.

By this definition, I'm sure you can identify witches all around you. From the Women's International Troublemakers from Hell (W.I.T.C.H.) to the lesbian community. She is the single mother that proves a man is not needed to raise a family. She is the female executive, entrepreneur, or any other form of success that boosts the woman's confidence to the most vile of levels. She is Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and all the wicked women that follow her. The witches surround us and are growing in power, this is undeniable. For every woman we have tried to silence, there is a daughter she taught to scream.

And how can we as men rid the witches from our lives? Let the hammer be metaphorical but let it strike with very real strength. We must tear down the witch's soul and prevent her from coaxing others to follow in her wicked ways. We must convince her to shrink her own body and bite off her own tongue. We must turn their curses inward on each other and teach them to hate their own femininity. We must burn them at the stake and make a public display of such heretics. We cannot turn a blind eye to the young witches that grow in our daughters, mothers, friends, and wives or they will cast spells to permanently blind us all.

We have convinced these women that they are weak and powerless - this is how we hold our control. We must not allow them to think otherwise, we must never admit the potential such witchcraft holds. For the day a witch knows how strong she can become is the day the witch will burn us instead. Hold your torches high, gentlemen, and ensure the flame is pointed at them.



Artwork by
Anna Skladany

WITCHES AND SEXUALITY

By Meg Harris

We are taught as children through stories that witches are ugly, green, powerful, and dangerous. We are even shown the emotional characteristics of witches as angry, old, scared, sexual, and out of control. Wait? Are these characteristics beginning to sound familiar? You guessed it, witches are the antonym of how a male dominated society wants a woman to behave.

Witches are rarely mild tempered, their anger is seen as vindictive and outlandish. This portrayal was meant to invalidate female anger (Korvette). Often times women are told they are being hysterical, emotional or unreasonable. The sentiment that witches are villainous and angry operates under the same deductive logic.

Many images and stories of witches follow the plot arch that they are dissatisfied with their life or envious of another woman's life, so they embark on new, dangerous methods of gaining their desire. This plot ends with the witch being overwhelmed by the amount of power she summoned (Korvette). This message is two-fold, it conveys that women are too insensible to understand the complexity of magic. It also implies, they cannot handle strength. Both arguments try to justify withholding power from women. It is a way of communicating that women are too weak or fragile for any real amount of power.

Finally, witches represent an evil temptation of sexuality. In multiple tales the

witch is jealous of or pitted against a "pure" woman. For example, in Snow White, the Evil Witch Queen is consumed with envy for the young, virgin girl, Snow White. Another example, is Elphaba in the Wizard of Oz, the green faced sorceress is trying to corrupt the untouched Dorothy. Witches are constantly contrasted with purity and innocence.

This juxtaposition not only appears in fiction, but in reality as well. Many of the women accused of witchcraft in the Witch Trials, both in Salem and in Europe, were not virgins or were believed to be tarnished, their sexual experience "spoiled" them. In fact, a character in popular historical treaty on witchcraft, "Malleus Maleficarum", was a women described as a "poor little virgin most devout" (Broedel). This woman was able to cure bewitched people by reciting the Lord's Prayer with "full faith" (Broedel). Countless times we see witch tales equating goodness with virginity, faith, and demure in nature - the ideal woman.

Even today the words "witch" and "slut" are throw at women who break out of the mold of an "ideal woman". Female politicians are called angry witches when speaking against the status quo or trying to their status. Feminists are labelled as ugly while refusing to shave, wear bras, or keep their hair in "feminine" styles. The characteristics and villainization of witches, like so many societal constructions, are built to maintain a male dominated world.

Nursing Nothing: Witchcraft And Female Sexuality In "The Winter's Tale"
By Kirstie Culick Rosenfield
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/44029940?seq=1>

Witchcraft as an expression of female sexuality
by Hans Peter Broedel
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327124297_Witchcraft_as_an_expression_of_female_sexuality

HOW TO DRY HERBS LIKE A REAL KITCHEN WITCH



By Arran Bowen

Air drying herbs is a kitchen witch tactic that goes back centuries and is incredibly useful for preserving those beautiful summer leaves and flowers to use all winter long. Drying your own herbs from the farmer's market, or better yet, your own garden is a great way to save money on cooking spices. Many garden herbs have medicinal properties as well.

Step 1: Select what kind of herbs you would like to dry. Large, flat leaf herbs like mint, sage, and basil are ideal for air-drying in small bundles, but you can also dry herbs like rosemary, thyme, or lavender.

Step 2: Only dry the most important, useful part of the plant. For something like sage, that would be the flavorful leaves! However, for lavender the purple buds are the most potent and most edible part of the plant.

Step 3: If you've purchased your herbs from the store or nearby market, wash them thoroughly and lay them on a towel to dry, as hanging them up wet can cause the herbs to rot. If you've picked your herbs from your own garden, it may actually be best NOT to wash them, as rinsing could disturb the fresh oils on the plant. It's best to harvest them in the mid-morning, when the dew has dried, but before the sun has burned off the essential oils in the herbs.

Step 4: Using twist-ties or cooking twine (or really any sturdy string or rubber band will do!) make small bundles of herbs, grouping the stems together at one end and wrapping them in twine.

KITCHEN WITCH TIPS

- Hanging lavender in your kitchen window or planting it by your garden gate will always bring good luck.
- Flowers like Calendula, Hibiscus, and Chamomile are great to grow at home and taste fantastic in a nice cup of herbal tea.

Step 5: Leave yourself a bit of string at the end and tie off the bundles. It's important to keep the bundles small in order to avoid rot during the drying process.

Step 6: Hang your herbs in a warm place without too much sunlight, letting the leaves or flowers hang down towards the ground. Your herbs will be ready to use in 1-2 weeks and can be pulled off of the bundles for cooking, or brewed in tea.





RUN TO THE KITCHEN AND ● FETCH ME A CLEAVER

By Kailah Peters

Artwork by Anna Skladany



Anger engulfs the mind like mold. It begins as one small spot resting in a wet, dark patch of being — one bruise decorating a cheekbone. If left untreated, like most women's anger is, it consumes and sickens all that surrounds it. Margaret's anger, like her injuries, had been untreated for years. By the time she concocted her hex, she was more anger than woman.

She filled a bath with steaming water and lay in it as she mixed a paste of her husband's blood, cemetery dirt, and wasp

wings. The color was a petrifying black. The paste filled the room with the sickening smell of iron. After she had cleansed her body, she stood over the tub and rubbed the paste between her legs.

At first, it burned, but it suddenly changed to a chill that traveled up her spine. Though every muscle in her body wanted to clench like the fist of her husband, she forced her jaw open as she uttered a spell.

“Enter my body as I enter yours. Caress my skin and I’ll mold your mind. Do as I say if I say it three times.”

Outside her home, clouds darkened and fat droplets of rain filled the air. Lightning struck and the lights of her bathroom flickered. For a moment, every shadow in the room morphed into a silhouette. Their whispering hands reached for Margaret, some stroking her hair, others delicately tracing the curves of her body. As she closed her eyes, their lithe fingers reached beyond the black paste and into her. The shadow pumped magic deeper into her and massaged the paste into the soft, supple skin of her lower lips. She shivered and moaned as the magic spread through her veins. The farther it reached the more painful and pleasurable the experience. She convulsed and collapsed to the floor. Silhouettes held her still, their cool hands pressed to her throat, thighs, hips, and ankles. For hours Margaret was trapped in the place between agony and ecstasy. Finally, the magic pulsed through her body one last time as thunder erupted in the air.

When her husband returned home from work, she tested her spell by asking him three times to bring her a red apple. His eyes glazed over and his feet led him out of the house. Her husband walked 7 miles to an orchard and tore his pants hopping the fence. When he returned home, he placed a ripe apple the color of fresh blood before her. He blinked several times, yawned, and returned to consciousness, complaining about his aching feet but remembering nothing of their origin.

He sat at the kitchen table and Margaret wasted no time putting her spell to work.

“My love,” she said with a sinister smile. “Run to the kitchen and fetch me a cleaver. Run to the kitchen and fetch me a cleaver. Run to the kitchen and fetch me a cleaver.”

Dazed and unaware of his actions, her husband did exactly as he was told. Margaret held the knife up and admired

the way it reflected light. She stared at her reflection and lightly ran her finger along the blade’s lethal edge. It was only when the blade turned and reflected a tender purple bruise under Margaret’s eye that she placed the knife firmly in her husband’s left hand and walked behind his chair. Leaning over slowly, she whispered her next command into his ear. As she leaned back, her husband lifted the cleaver high above his head and let it drop right below his right wrist. Neither Margaret nor her husband flinched as the blade ripped through flesh, shattered bone, and separated his hand from his arm. It only took three swings for him to chop off the hand that caused Margaret so much pain and anger.

Blood pooled on the table as her husband blinked into consciousness. Margaret laughed, but the sound was muffled by her husband’s screams. Crimson liquid dripped off the edge of the table as his hand lay motionless before him. What once seemed so threatening was now small and paling.

“Shut up. Shut up. Shut up,” she screamed. Her husband’s mouth snapped shut and the screams stopped. Margaret reached around him, kissed his cheek now wet with tears, and grabbed the apple from the sea of warm blood. In the eerie silence, she sat across from her husband. Shadows once more became silhouettes surrounding the pair. They slid hands up her thigh as she smiled at the part of herself turned on by the chaos and power she wielded. As the shadow squeezed her thigh, Margaret bit into the apple. Her teeth broke the fruit skin, blood and juice dripped from her lips and a taste almost as sweet as revenge itself filled her mouth.





WELCOME TO OUR COVEN, WITCHES

Though misogyny looks different today (think less crucifixion and more catcalling), the societal hatred remains. In defiance of this stigma, many womxn and feminists are reclaiming the word, making the label witch positive. While some witches practice pagan rites and use the term in spiritual contexts, others adopt the label as a social critique. We use the term to apply to both groups. Instead of an old crone with a large ugly nose (antisemitism?) and claws for nails, a witch is young, pretty, and smart. Hell, our modern witches don't even have to identify as women. What's important is that we see the power femininity holds and the power within ourselves.

Our Coven Congress is a quarterly gathering of witches to revel in our power. It's a sabbat that allows witches from all walks of life to talk about our experiences, opinions, and ideas. Next, we let the discussion inspire content included in each edition. Once we acknowledge our power, no one can take it away. A modern witch can yield that power to create a better world. Let men run scared. Let them complain that equality is an inconvenience for them. We know the truth - no one has to be torn down to build up others. No blood must be shed to treat the world with kindness. The witches of our coven will wield our power unapologetically and work endlessly for the world we desire.

So what do you say? Can you feel the magic pulsing in your veins? Will you join our coven?

If you're interested in submitting work for our next edition OR joining in at the next Coven Congress, please email us at theycalluszine@gmail.com or visit our website theycallus.com.

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